

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: March 14, 2013

Agenda Item: Future Fisheries Projects - Winter 2013 funding cycle

Division: Fisheries **Action Needed:** Approve Funding for Projects

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program provides funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications for funding are reviewed twice each year by a 14-member Future Fisheries Citizen Review Panel appointed by the Governor or his designee. The panel prioritizes its recommendations and forwards them to the FWP Commission every six months for consideration and approval. For the Winter 2013 funding cycle, the panel received 17 applications and identified 16 for potential funding. A Ranking Committee consisting of one panel member and two FWP staff ranked the projects identified by the full panel. To stay within the amount of Program money currently available, the Ranking Committee recommends that the Commission fund 15 of the proposals at a Program cost of \$585,490. Matching funds, or in-kind contributions from outside sources, total \$1,819,064.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The public was informed about the opportunity to apply for Program funding via news releases, a public meeting and information posted on the FWP website. All applications were posted on the FWP website, where there is an opportunity to submit on-line public comment. No on-line comments were received as of February 28, 2013. The Future Fisheries Citizen Review Panel conducted a public meeting in Helena on December 18, 2012 to review proposals (funding applications), discuss proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and receive public comment. No public comment was received at the meeting, other than comments expressed by the applicants in attendance. FWP prepared Environmental Assessments for projects recommended for funding, except for those proposals that are categorically excluded under the Montana Environmental Policy Act, or those subject to the federal National Environmental Policy Act or some other ongoing FWP regional process. A summary of the Future Fisheries Program proposals, the Citizen Review Panel recommendations and the recommendations of the Ranking Committee have been sent to the Commission.

Alternatives and Analysis

One alternative is to approve funding recommendations as submitted by the Ranking Committee. This would provide funds to assist in the completion of projects that will improve habitat for wild fish populations. Another alternative is to disapprove or modify the Ranking Committee's funding recommendations. This would result in partial completion or non-completion of habitat improvement projects, meaning a potential loss of opportunity to benefit wild fish populations.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the commission approve the funding recommendations as submitted by the Ranking Committee. Completion of these projects would benefit wild fish populations.

Proposed Motion

"I move that the FWP Commission approve the funding recommendations as submitted by the Ranking Committee for the Winter 2013 Funding Cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program."